

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHTV #2205/01 2801047
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 071047Z OCT 09
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3711
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAHQA/HQ USAF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEADWD/DA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CNO WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 6066
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 2638
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 6668
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 6876
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 6122
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 4758
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 6969
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3746
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 1961
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 0628
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 8145
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 3154
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 7134
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 9197
RUEHJI/AMCONSUL JEDDAH PRIORITY 1957
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 2925
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 002205

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR X0XX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

SIPDIS
E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Media reported that U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace Senator George Mitchell will arrive in the region today for talks with the Israeli and PA leaders. He is slated to meet with DM Ehud Barak tomorrow and with PM Benjamin Netanyahu on Friday. Maariv reported that the U.S. wants Israel to show flexibility vis-a-vis PA

President Mahmoud Abbas, who the U.S. reportedly believes has been weakened by his postponing of the handling of the Goldstone report, riots in Jerusalem, and growing security tension in the West Bank. However, Maariv cited the belief of senior Israeli diplomatic officials that a breakthrough in relations with the Palestinians is likely, that obstacles can be surmounted, and that the resumption of negotiations will soon be declared, possibly after Mitchell's visit.

All media reported that yesterday police briefly arrested Sheikh Raed Salah, the leader of the Islamic Movement's northern branch. The Jerusalem Magistrate's Court later refused to extend Salah's remand and ordered his banishment from Jerusalem for 30 days. The Jerusalem Post quoted sources in Yisrael Beiteinu as saying that the cabinet will consider legislation banning the Islamic Movement currently being drafted by the party's ministers Uzi Landau and Yitzhak Aharonovitch. The Jerusalem Post reported that senior Fatah official Hatem Abdel Kader, a former PA Minister for Jerusalem affairs, told the newspaper yesterday that recent violence in Jerusalem and the ongoing tensions surrounding the Temple Mount could trigger a third Intifada. (Maariv and other media cited the Israeli defense establishment's belief that disturbances could extend to the West Bank.) The media reported that senior PA officials, including President Abbas, blamed Israel for the recent violence around Jerusalem's Temple Mount. In an interview with Israel Radio this morning Kadima Knesset Member, former Internal Security Minister, and former Shin Bet head Avi Dichter expressed his belief that Salah's actions are fully coordinated with the PA.

HaQaretz and other media reported that the U.N. Security Council is scheduled to meet today to discuss Libya's request for an emergency session on the Goldstone report that accused Israel and the Palestinian group Hamas of committing war crimes during Israel's offensive in Gaza. Vietnam's Ambassador Le Luong Minh, who holds the council presidency this month, said he set closed-door talks after receiving the request from Libya, the only Arab member on the 15-nation council. The Palestinian Mission at the U.N. issued a press release saying it affirmed full support for the Libyan request. HaQaretz reported that an associate of President Abbas told the newspaper yesterday that if Israel does not soften its positions on the peace process, the PA will resume pushing to get the Goldstone report moved to the Security Council and, from there, to the International Criminal Court.

The Jerusalem Post reported that PM Avigdor Lieberman seeks to fashion a whole new Israeli foreign policy. The newspaper wrote that, in a secret internal memo, the Foreign Ministry calls for less dependence on the U.S., forging closer links with the developing world, reducing expectations for Palestinian talks, and zero tolerance for anti-Semitism.

Yediot and Israel Radio reported that today a cornerstone-laying ceremony will take place at the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Nof Zion (next to the Palestinian village of Jabel Mukaber) to mark the beginning of the second stage of building there. Speaking on Israel Radio, Labor Knesset Member and former Education Minister Yuli Tamir lamented the implications of this development for the peace process.

Yediot and other media reported that Noam Shalit, the father of the abducted IDF soldier Gilad Shalit -- a dual Israeli-French citizen -- is leaving for Paris today to meet with associates of French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The meetings were set before the screening of the video showing Gilad.

Yediot reported that yesterday shots were fired at IDF soldiers carrying out private works along the Gaza border.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the Civil Administration in the Territories ignored a Tuesday deadline set by human rights organizations, demanding that it cancel a decision made last month and allow them to continue representing Palestinians seeking to enter Israel on humanitarian grounds. In an unrelated matter, Yediot reported that Israel is helping the U.S. build the Civil Administration in Iraq after the Americans decided to copy the model of the Civil Administration in the Territories.

The Jerusalem Post reported that amid threats by settlers that they

will hinder Palestinians from harvesting land, the IDF and Border Police have deployed large numbers of security personnel at numerous hotspots throughout the West Bank in an effort to prevent violence between the sides.

Yediot reported that Israel Military Industries (IMI) has developed a system that recognizes guided anti-tank missiles immediately upon their launching and diverts them.

The Jerusalem Post reported that influential Russian Jewish leader and politician Boris Shpigel has promised to fund the defense of IDF soldiers caught in legal troubles overseas due to their military service.

Maariv and The Jerusalem Post reported that yesterday three Israeli conscientious objectors called on students of the University of Cape Town to boycott Israel and assist the struggle against the occupation. The Jerusalem Post cited the fear of Cape Town Jews that their visit may spur anti-Semitism.

The Jerusalem Post reported that the University of California, Irvine (UCI), has launched an internal probe and contacted law enforcement authorities over a student-organized event that may have raised money for Hamas. The investigation is in response to allegations made by the Zionist Organization of America, which alerted local law enforcement officials last week about the May event. Organized by the Muslim Student Union at UCI, the event featured British politician George Galloway, who reportedly solicited funds for Viva Palestina, his organization that brings aid to Gaza.

HaQaretz quoted Egyptian Foreign Ministry spokesman Hossam Zaki as saying yesterday that Fatah and Hamas representatives will meet in Cairo on October 24 to sign a reconciliation agreement.

Citing Reuters, HaQaretz quoted the PA as saying yesterday that it had asked the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) to press Israel to release more frequencies for a long-awaited second mobile phone operator.

HaQaretz and Israel Radio reported that Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah is expected to arrive in Damascus today for a historic, three-day visit, during which he will meet with Syrian President Bashar Assad. Assad has been in Riyadh twice in the past six months, but this will be the King's first visit to the Syrian capital since 2005. The two leaders are expected to discuss Lebanon's future. Relations between Syria and Saudi Arabia soured in the wake of the assassination of Lebanon's former prime minister, Rafiq Hariri, in February 2005.

Yediot reported that, for the first time since PM Netanyahu was sworn in, an Israeli cabinet member (Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz) met with a senior Turkish official (Minister of State in Charge of the Treasury Ali Babacan) in Istanbul, on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund's annual meeting. The newspaper noted that the meeting could signal a thaw in Turkish-Israeli relations.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Israel ranked 27th of the 182 countries in the U.N Human Development Index, which measures quality of life and was published in Bangkok on Monday. Israel dropped four places since the last report came out two years ago. However, The Jerusalem Post noted that Israel's ranking tops other Mideast countries by far.

Globes reported that Business Week ranked the Israel pharmaceutical firm Teva ranks 20th among the world's best firms.

Maariv reported that one week before the Kippur War, then-Mossad agent Avner Yaron warned his superiors in 1973 that an Arab attack was imminent. In an interview with the daily, he says that everything could have been different had his warning been heeded.

Block Quotes:

I. "Restraint in a Delicate Place"

The independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (10/7): The growing tension surrounding the Temple Mount threatens to undermine the calm Israel has enjoyed for the past few months.... Netanyahu's government played up its efforts to populate East Jerusalem with Jews while standing up against the U.S. demand for a freeze on construction in the settlements. The PA, under President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad, calls for saving Al-Aqsa while facing stiff criticism from within its own ranks for not pressing discussion of the Goldstone report in the United Nations. Both sides must show restraint and focus on renewing negotiations toward a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict instead of igniting a fire at this sensitive site and risking another violent confrontation. Israel has a unique responsibility due to its control over Jerusalem, and it must use utmost caution and avoid provocations and insensitive remarks such as that by Jerusalem District police commander Aharon Franco, who accused the city's Muslims of being ungrateful. The capital's police force has thus far succeeded in preventing an escalation of the conflict. This attitude must guide the cabinet as well in the days to come.

II. "Bob Dylan form Umm Al Fahm"

Conservative columnist Erel Segal wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/7): Israel stands at a critical crossroads. Up till now we hesitated when facing the Sheikh [Raed Salah] and his followers, and we strengthened radical elements. Now is the time to outlaw them. Things are apparently viewed differently in our neighborhood. The Egyptian and Jordanian regimes handle the Muslim Brotherhood in a very undemocratic, intolerant fashion, without a multicultural discourse -- to say nothing about the chivalrous Syrian rights defenders. It sometimes looks as if history returns with sickly twists, like the soul of Mufti Haj Amin Hussein -- an SS Gruppenfuehrer -- that has come back in the figure of Raed Salah.

III. "Goldstone... So Far"

The conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (10/7): QJust when Israelis thought we had a respite from the harmful repercussions of the profoundly unfair Goldstone Mission Report, it transpires that Hamas is insisting Fatah leader Mahmoud Abbas push the Security Council to consider Richard Goldstone's bill of particulars against Israel (during Operation Cast Lead at the turn of the year) -- or else the deal due to be signed between Fatah and Hamas in Cairo on October 26 will be in jeopardy. Abbas is also under withering pressure from within his own movement to exploit Goldstone for all its worth. That would have been Abbas's natural inclination too, but the Fatah chief bowed to U.S. pressure to allow the report to be shelved at least until March 2010. The Obama administration appreciates that if Goldstone monopolizes the daily agenda, Benjamin Netanyahu's government will be too preoccupied to conduct meaningful talks with the Palestinian Authority. Moreover, a toxic environment dominated by Goldstone will sap any popular support within Israel for further compromise with the Palestinians.... Of course, we're supposed to give Goldstone credit because he's a friend of Israel.... Moreover, didn't he ask Hamas to release Gilad Shalit on humanitarian grounds? And didn't he give Hamas hell, too? Well, actually, he originated the convoluted idea that attacks against Israeli civilians /would constitute war crimes and may amount to crimes against humanity. In any case, Hamas is so plainly unconcerned that anyone will understand such prattle as blame that it is using the Goldstone Report to batter the hapless Abbas. And it's too early to assess how much damage the judge's work will yet do....

IV. QChurchill and His Disciple

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in the independent, left-leaning HaQaretz (10/7): Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is an admirer of Winston Churchill and views him as a role model.... The wars in Lebanon and Gaza helped Netanyahu adopt [one of the] aspects of the Churchill legacy, the bombings of German cities. When Israel is criticized for bombing Beirut and Gaza, Netanyahu

responds by mentioning Dresden and Hamburg.... Like Netanyahu, Churchill also believed in if they give, they'll get as a fundamental principle of statecraft. The American support he received came at a price: the dismantling of the British Empire. In Netanyahu's view, the Iranian threat against Israel resembles the Nazi threat on Britain. Like Churchill, Netanyahu hopes for American help to lift the threat; like Roosevelt, U.S. President Barack Obama demands the dismantling of Israel's little empire in the territories and the liberation of the Palestinians from occupation. It will be interesting to see whether Netanyahu also learns this lesson from the leader he admires, or whether the analogy ends with bombing.

IV. "Intifada vs. Normalizations"

Chief Economic Editor and senior columnist Sever Plotker wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/7): The strengthening of the Palestinian middle classes, which might fall in love with a normal standard of living -- shaking off the continuation of the struggle and enjoying the proximity to the big Israel market -- is disliked by the militant Palestinian leadership, and not only that. The tension between economic and personal progress and the diplomatic and national impasse is tearing up the entire Palestinian society and creating a dissonance in consciousness that is looking for an outlet. If an Intifada breaks out, it might focus on the Temple Mount, but its logic is definitely not linked to religious feelings. As during the past ones, it will originate in an explosive cocktail of diplomatic stalemate and an economic boom. It turns out that they don't work well together.

CUNNINGHAM